

**Notice of Allowability**

Application No.

09/513,005

Examiner

Roland G. Foster

Applicant(s)

BEDINGFIELD ET AL.

Art Unit

2645

**-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address--**

All claims being allowable, PROSECUTION ON THE MERITS IS (OR REMAINS) CLOSED in this application. If not included herewith (or previously mailed), a Notice of Allowance (PTOL-85) or other appropriate communication will be mailed in due course. **THIS NOTICE OF ALLOWABILITY IS NOT A GRANT OF PATENT RIGHTS.** This application is subject to withdrawal from issue at the initiative of the Office or upon petition by the applicant. See 37 CFR 1.313 and MPEP 1308.

1. ☒ This communication is responsive to the examiner's amendment, approved on 08/17/04.
2. ☒ The allowed claim(s) is/are 1-14 (were 13-26).
3. ☐ The drawings filed on \_\_\_\_\_ are accepted by the Examiner.
4. ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some\* c) ☐ None of the:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this national stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

\* Certified copies not received: \_\_\_\_\_.

Applicant has THREE MONTHS FROM THE "MAILING DATE" of this communication to file a reply complying with the requirements noted below. Failure to timely comply will result in ABANDONMENT of this application.

**THIS THREE-MONTH PERIOD IS NOT EXTENDABLE.**

5. ☐ A SUBSTITUTE OATH OR DECLARATION must be submitted. Note the attached EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT or NOTICE OF INFORMAL PATENT APPLICATION (PTO-152) which gives reason(s) why the oath or declaration is deficient.
6. ☐ CORRECTED DRAWINGS (as "replacement sheets") must be submitted.
- (a) ☐ including changes required by the Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) attached
- 1) ☐ hereto or 2) ☐ to Paper No./Mail Date \_\_\_\_\_.
- (b) ☐ including changes required by the attached Examiner's Amendment / Comment or in the Office action of Paper No./Mail Date \_\_\_\_\_.
- Identifying indicia such as the application number (see 37 CFR 1.84(c)) should be written on the drawings in the front (not the back) of each sheet. Replacement sheet(s) should be labeled as such in the header according to 37 CFR 1.121(d).
7. ☐ DEPOSIT OF and/or INFORMATION about the deposit of BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL must be submitted. Note the attached Examiner's comment regarding REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEPOSIT OF BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL.

**Attachment(s)**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1. <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)  | 5. <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)            |
| 2. <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)                                | 6. <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413),<br>Paper No./Mail Date _____. |
| 3. <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statements (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08),<br>Paper No./Mail Date _____ | 7. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Examiner's Amendment/Comment                    |
| 4. <input type="checkbox"/> Examiner's Comment Regarding Requirement for Deposit<br>of Biological Material          | 8. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Examiner's Statement of Reasons for Allowance   |
|   | 9. <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____.   |

## **DETAILED ACTION**

### **EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT**

Authorization for this examiner's amendment was given in a telephone interview with the applicant's representative, Jeff Kuester (Reg. No. 34,367), regarding an amendment proposed by applicant's representative and received by the examiner via a facsimile transmission from applicant's representative on August 18, 2004.

The application has been amended as follows. Please find the facsimile attached hereto, which the examiner relies upon as the examiner's amendment. The examiner's amendment can be created from a facsimile transmission received by the examiner and referenced in the examiner's amendment. See MPEP §1302.04 [R-2].

### ***Allowable Subject Matter***

Claims 13-26 are allowed.

### ***Examiner's Reasons for Indicating Allowable Subject Matter***

The claims are directed to a system for validating messaging transactions between customers served by voice mail servers locating in different geographic regions (or areas) operated by different service providers (or different companies). A message directory is used to check the characteristics of the two voice mail servers (or messaging servers) to determine whether messages can be transferred between the two.

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Certain limitations expressly limit the scope of the claims. For example, all independent claims require the determination of whether messages may be transferred between the first and second voice mail servers (or messaging servers) regardless of any information associated with any particular recipient. Thus, any message transfer system that regards information associated with particular recipients, as is commonplace and desirable in the art (e.g., the address of the intended recipient), would not read upon the claimed invention. Further, independent claim 1 limits the claimed invention to voice mail servers located in different geographic regions and/or operated by different service providers. Independent claim 19 limits the claimed invention to using an identity code to determine information including the location of the first voice mail server, the identity of the service provider operating the first voice mail server, and the existence of agreements between the first service provider and other service providers. Independent claim 20 limits the claimed invention to causing the messaging directory to use business rules and/or regulatory rules.

The closest prior art of record is Bartholomew et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,812,639) as applied in the prior Office action. Bartholomew discloses all within the claims except determination of whether messages may be transferred between the first and second voice mail servers (or messaging servers) regardless of any information associated with any particular recipient. Rather, Bartholomew substantially relies upon the determination of information associated with a particular recipient, such as the recipient's address, in order to determine whether messages may be transferred between the messaging systems.

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The remaining prior art of record fails to teach or fairly suggest the obviousness of substantially modifying Bartholomew in order to support determination of whether messages may be transferred regardless of any information associated with any particular recipient.

Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance."

#### ***Drawings***

The application having been allowed, formal drawings are required in response to this Office Action.

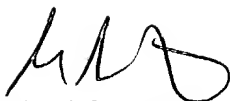
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***Conclusion***

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Roland Foster whose telephone number is (703) 305-1491. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Fan S. Tsang, can be reached on (703) 305-4895. The fax phone number for this group is (703) 872-9306.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to customer service whose telephone number is (703) 306-0377.



Roland G. Foster  
Primary Patent Examiner  
August 23, 2004

**TKHR****THOMAS, KAYDEN, HORSTEMEYER & RISLEY, L.L.P.**

ATTORNEYS AT LAW

100 Galleria Pkwy, NW  
Suite 1750  
Atlanta, GA 30339-5948  
www.tkhr.comREQUESTED  
BY EXAMINERJeffrey R. Kuester  
(770) 933-9500

E-mail: Jeff.Kuester@tkhr.com

**FACSIMILE TRANSMISSION**

August 16, 2004

**[190252-1580]****TO**

Examiner Roland G. Foster

**FAX: 703-746-5992****FROM**

Jeff Kuester

**FAX: 770-951-0933****TEL: 703-305-1491****TEL: 770-933-9500****RE: Draft Claim Amendments Concerning Application 09/513,005**

The attached claims include draft amendments for claims 13, 19 and 20.  
We look forward to speaking with you at 2:00 p.m. Wednesday, August 18, 2004.

Thank you for your time and attention.

**Number of Pages (Including This Cover Sheet): - 4 - Page(s)**  
**PLEASE ACKNOWLEDGE SAFE AND CLEAR RECEIPT OF ALL PAGES.**

**CONFIDENTIAL**

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**INTERNATIONAL PATENT, TRADEMARK AND COPYRIGHT LAW AND RELATED LITIGATION**

Huntsville, Alabama

Atlanta, Georgia

# DRAFT

1-12. (Previously Canceled)

13. (Currently Amended) A method for validating messaging transactions between customers served by voice mail servers located in different geographic regions, operated by different service providers, or both, the method comprising:
- ~~creating a messaging directory with information on characteristics of respective voice mail servers;~~
  - querying ~~the a~~ messaging directory having information on characteristics of respective voice mail servers to identify a first voice mail server associated with a caller originating a message and a second voice mail server associated with the recipient of the message; and
  - based on the identities of the first and second voice mail servers, causing the messaging directory to check the respective characteristics of the two voice mail servers to determine whether the message may be transferred between the first and second voice mail servers regardless of any information associated with any particular recipient.
14. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 13 wherein the querying involves using the identities of the first and second voice mail servers to determine (i) their locations, (ii) the identity of the one or more service provider(s) operating the first or second voice mail server or (iii) both the locations of the first and second voice mail servers and the identity of the one or more service provider(s) operating the first or second voice mail servers.
15. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 14 wherein the querying is performed by providing the messaging directory with at least the message recipient's telephone number correlated to at least the identities of one of the first or second voice mail servers.
16. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 15 wherein the providing is implemented by formulating a query to the messaging directory and transmitting the query over a network.
17. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 16 wherein the determining involves using the location of the first or second voice mail server to determine whether applicable regulatory rules allow message transactions between those locations.

# DRAFT

18. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 13 wherein the determining step involves determining whether the message transaction may proceed if the identities of the service providers operating the first and second voice mail servers are different.
19. (Currently Amended) A process for determining the identity of a first voice mail server associated with an originating caller that has left a message with a second voice mail server associated with a receiving caller that may seek to respond to the message, the process comprising:
- ascertaining an identifier associated with the originating caller;
  - using the identifier to determine an identity code that identifies the first voice mail server;
  - using the identity code to determine information including the location of the first voice mail server, the identity of the service provider operating the first voice mail server, and the existence of agreements between the first service provider and other service providers; and
  - using the information to determine whether the receiving caller may communicate with the first voice mail server in response to the message regardless of any information associated with any particular recipient.
20. (Currently Amended) A method for validating the passage of data between customers of different companies operating messaging servers that serve different areas, the method comprising:
- causing a messaging directory to include information relating to the passage of data between customers of different companies operating messaging servers that serve different areas; and
  - causing the messaging directory to use the information including business rules, regulatory rules or both to determine whether the data may be passed between the customers' messaging servers regardless of any information associated with any particular recipient.
21. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 20 further comprising identifying the voice mail servers involved in the passage of the data



# DRAFT

22. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 21 further comprising using the identities of the voice mail servers to determine their respective locations, their respective operating service providers or both.
23. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 22 further comprising applying regulatory rules to determine whether the data may be passed between the identified voice mail servers.
24. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 23 further comprising determining whether the operating service providers will accept data from one another.
25. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 24 further comprising confirming to the customer the destination of the data or message.
26. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 20 further comprising out-dialing a telephone call to a person not subscribing to regional messaging services in order to deliver a message.
27. (Cancelled).
28. (Cancelled).
29. (Cancelled).
30. (Cancelled).